

Proposed Recycling Ordinance FAQs

Q: What is the purpose of the proposed ordinance?

A: The purpose of the ordinance is to increase the City's recycling rate by requiring all multifamily properties, homeowners associations not receiving City solid waste collection services, and businesses to establish recycling programs. These entities are responsible for generating 77% of all the City's solid waste.

Q: Why is the ordinance necessary?

The State of Virginia requires each jurisdiction to maintain a 25% recycling rate and the City Council established a goal to achieve a 35% recycling. In 2004 the City of Alexandria achieved a 20% recycling rate.

Q: Did the City ever attain a 25% recycling rate?

In 2001 the City achieved a 25% recycling rate but in 2002, because the City could no longer include land-applied sewage sludge in its calculations, the rate declined significantly.

Q: Who will be required to recycle?

A: Multifamily properties including apartment buildings and condominiums; commercial businesses including, but not limited to office buildings, hotels, restaurants, gas stations, and retail stores; and homeowners associations who contract for solid waste.

Q: What are multifamily properties required recycle?

A: Multifamily properties are required to recycle *mixed paper*—including corrugated cardboard, newspaper, magazines, junk mail, office paper, paper bags, and paperboard such as cereal boxes; and *commingled containers*—including glass jars and bottles, aluminum cans, plastic jugs and bottles and tin/steel cans. Existing multifamily program elements can be incorporated into their recycling plan.

Q: What are businesses required recycle?

A: Businesses are required to recycle the two materials they generate in largest quantities. This includes materials such as mixed paper, commingled containers (see above), clean wood/pallets, scrap metal, used motor oil, tires, used antifreeze, brush, leaves, grass, textiles, or plastic film.

Q: Why are single-family homes exempt from the ordinance?

A: Single-family homes are not exempt from recycling. Single-family homes served by the City are required to recycle; however, the City will not enforce action against individual households. Rather, the City is working to encourage increased participation by single-family residents. In addition, single-family homes or town houses not served are required to recycle. These entities will be treated like a

multifamily property, whereby they will be required to submit Recycling Implementation Plans and Commercial Recycling Data Reports, or be subject to penalties (see below for more details).

Q: Will single-family homes served by the City ever be fined for not participating in recycling?

A: If the City demonstrates that it cannot achieve a 25% recycling rate, or the 35% City Council goal, by 2009, the City may face fines and may need to create a penalty system.

Q: What is the role of the private companies that collect refuse and recycling from multifamily properties and businesses?

Private solid waste companies, or waste haulers, contract directly with multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses to provide collection services. Each year these companies will be responsible for submitting a Recycling Data Report, which will provide the total number of tons collected for disposal vs. the total number of tons collected for recycling. In addition, they will be required to provide their customers with solid waste and recycling data for their specific property(s).

Q: How much will haulers be fined if they do not report their tonnage information to the City?

A: As in other northern Virginia jurisdictions, haulers that do not submit annual Recycling Data Reports each year will be issued a fine. Each individual violation shall be \$500 for the first violation, \$1,000 for the second violation, and \$1,500 for the third violation. If they do not provide the Recycling Data Report following the third violation, the City can revoke the company's hauler license.

Q: What are the program requirements for multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses?

A: Multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses will have to submit Recycling Implementation Plans and Recycling Data Reports, every other year, or be subject to penalties, as outlined in the ordinance. The first Recycling Implementation Plan is due January 1, 2007 and the first Recycling Data Report is due January 1, 2008.

Q: What is a Recycling Implementation Plan?

A Recycling Implementation Plans provides the City with details regarding a property's recycling program. Recycling Implementation Plans are required by other jurisdiction in Northern Virginia. Details outlined in the plans include the name of the hauler, types of recyclables to be recovered, location and size of collection containers, number of employees or tenants, and all contact information for the property owner, homeowners association, or property management company. The first Recycling Implementation Plan is due January 1, 2007.

Q: What is a Recycling Data Report?

A: Multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses will also have to submit a Recycling Data Report every other year. These entities will require their haulers to report to them the amount of solid waste vs. recycling collected at their property. The first Recycling Data Report is due January 1, 2008.

Q: How do I know when to submit a Recycling Implementation Plan?

A: Every other year in November, the City will send a notice to multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses to notify them that their Recycling Implementation Plans are due. The City is developing a web-based plan form that can be submitted online, or downloaded and mailed or faxed to the City. The first Recycling Implementation Plan is due January 1, 2007.

Q: What is the penalty for not submitting a Recycling Implementation Plan?

A: For the first two years of the program, multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses will be issued a class four civil penalty if they do not submit their plans on time. Beginning in January 2008, however, the City will be able to categorize properties by how much solid waste they generated the previous year. Those properties generating *more than ten tons* of solid waste will be considered a **large generator** and will be issued a class three civil penalty if their Recycling Implementation Plan is not submitted on time. For those properties generating *less than ten tons* of refuse in the previous calendar year, will be considered a **small generator** and issued a class five civil penalty if their Recycling Implementation Plans are not submitted on time.

Q: How do I know when to submit a Recycling Data Report?

A: Every other year in November, the City will send a notice to all multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses to notify them that their Recycling Data Reports are due. The City is developing a web-based data reporting form that can be submitted online, or downloaded and mailed or faxed to the City. The first Recycling Data Report is due January 1, 2008.

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Q: Why do we ask for a Recycling Data Report from commercial entities, when we are already getting data from the haulers?

A: The information collected from the haulers provides the City with aggregate data that helps calculate the citywide recycling rate, while the information provided by individual properties will help evaluate their programs. This information not only provides information on how a program can be improved, it reveals important information to the property manager about how to promote the program to their tenants, estimate the number and size of containers needed for collection, and determine how often these containers need to be emptied. Additionally, it helps the City double check to make sure the aggregate numbers being provided by the haulers are accurate.

Q: Will there be any penalties for multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses for not recycling?

A: The City will not take enforcement action against properties for not recycling. Rather, the City will work with individual properties to encourage increased participation by their tenants by providing technical assistance and outreach assistance.

Q: Will multifamily properties, homeowners associations, and businesses ever be fined for not participating in recycling?

A: If the City demonstrates that it cannot achieve a 25% recycling rate, or the 35% goal set by the City Council, by 2009, they may consider implementing an enforcement program for the commercial recycling program.